

**RESEARCH NOTE:**

## Learning experience of marginal farmers in sugarcane cultivation

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**SUMMARY :** The effective learning experience can be had effective learning situations provided by a skillful instructor who knows what he wants, who has the materials to accomplish his goals and the skills to use them effectively. The study was conducted in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. A total number of ten sugarcane technologies with technical units were selected for the study. The result of the study showed that the marginal farmers possessed low level of learning experience. The learning experience may be further enhanced by majority of the marginal farmers to prefer personal localite channels for getting information.

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**KEY WORDS:**

Marginal farmers,  
Learning experience

The key to agricultural development lies in the mind, heart and hands of the farmers. Communication of agricultural information was inefficient and ineffective leading to an increase in the gap between innovations in the lab and the adoption in the fields by the farmers. Thus, there is need to have more effective transfer of technology system. Realizing the gap in research and accumulated felt needs at the grass root level, the present investigation was formulated as an attempt to study the following objectives :

- Relationship of socio- economics and psychological characteristics with the learning experience of marginal farmers.
- To study the practice wise learning experience of marginal farmers in sugarcane cultivation.

The study was carried out in selected six villages from six blocks of Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. A total number of ten sugarcane technologies with technological units were selected for the study. The eighty respondent were selected from six villages using proportionate random sampling. Fourteen independent variables were selected based on judges opinion. Data collection was done through a well constructed and pre tested interview schedule, collected data were analysed by using appropriate statistical tests.

**Learning experience :**

In this study, learning experience was operationalised as a service of learning activities performed by the respondent to learn the selected sugarcane technologies.

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Respondents were asked to indicate the learning activities performed by them under three major information sources *viz.*, personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources to learn each and every selected sugarcane technology.

#### Assigning weightage to learning experience :

Following the procedure adopted by Athimuthu (1990) and Mahendra Pandian (1992), 48 learning activities were identified under three major categories of information source *viz.*, personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources. The identified list of learning activities were referred to 30 judges for assigning weightages ranging from 0-10 according to their importance for the adoption of each of the sugarcane technology. The arithmetic mean of the weightages of the judges was taken as the activity weightages to the respective learning experience under selected sugarcane technologies. This resulted in a separate set of learning activity weightages for each sugarcane technology.

#### Computing learning experience :

This was quantified by utilizing the activity weightages of such learning activities reported to have been performed by the respondents to learn a particular sugarcane technology. The addition of activity weightages for all the 48 learning activities of particular sugarcane technology. Then the actual learning experience score was divided by the maximum learning experience score and multiplied by 100 to yield the extent of learning experience for a particular sugarcane technology. In this way, the extent of learning experience for all the ten sugarcane technologies were added and then divided by 10 (the total number of sugarcane technologies), which yielded the extent of learning experience of sugarcane technology. Besides this, the learning experience gained through various learning activities performed under three major information sources *viz.*, personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media channels for the individual technologies was also worked out.

The zero order correlation co-efficient ( $r$ ) was worked out to study the relationship of independent variables with the learning experience of marginal sugarcane cultivators and the results are presented in Table 1.

It could be seen from the Table 1 that out of fourteen independent variables, only two variable *viz.*, mass media

exposure ( $X_{11}$ ) and Information source utilization ( $X_{13}$ ) were found to have positive and highly significant relationship with the leading experience of marginal categories sugarcane growers. The mass media exposure contact and information source utilization might have provided the opportunity for the farmers to contact authenticates sources of information to learn. This might have resulted in higher learning experience.

#### Practice wise learning experience of marginal farmers :

The state collected on the recommend practices learn by the marginal farmers through the learning activities under the personal locality, personal cosmopolite and mass media channels are presented in Table 2.

From Table 2, it could be observed that majority of the marginal farmers performed the learning activities under personal localite channels learning of nine practices *viz.*, sett selection (91.25 %), planting (87.50 %), bio fertilizer application (88.75 %), phosphotic fertilizer application (87.50 %), nitrogenous fertilizer application (85.00 %) and potash fertilizer application (78.75 %).

It could be inferred that the marginal farmers performed the learning activities under personal localite channels in their learning for most of the practices. It might be due to easy accessible, approaches and cost effective nature of personal localite channels. Mass

**Table 1 : Relationship of socio – economics and psychological characteristics with the learning experience level of sugarcane cultivators (n = 80)**

Sr. No.	Variables	'r' value
		Marginal farmers
X <sub>1</sub>	Age	-0.160 NS
X <sub>2</sub>	Educational status	0.166 NS
X <sub>3</sub>	Occupational status	0.228*
X <sub>4</sub>	Area under cultivation	-0.026 NS
X <sub>5</sub>	Farming experience	-0.093 NS
X <sub>6</sub>	Experience in sugarcane	0.75 NS
X <sub>7</sub>	Annual income	0.127 NS
X <sub>8</sub>	Social participation	0.162 NS
X <sub>9</sub>	Extension agency contact	0.022 NS
X <sub>10</sub>	Decision making	-0.188 NS
X <sub>11</sub>	Mass media exposure	0.513**
X <sub>12</sub>	Scientific orientation	0.047NS
X <sub>13</sub>	Information source utilization	0.578**
X <sub>14</sub>	Innovativeness	0.166 NS

\* and \*\* indicate significance of value at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively  
NS = Non - significant

**Table 2 : Practice wise learning experience of marginal farmers in sugarcane cultivation**

Sr. No.	Technology	Learning activities					
		Personal localite		Personal cosmopolite		Mass media	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Sett relation	73	91.25	23	28.25	13	16.25
2.	Sett treatment	67	83.75	21	26.25	9	11.25
3.	Planting	70	87.50	13	16.25	7	8.75
4.	Herbicide application	71	88.75	23	28.75	13	16.25
5.	Bio-fertilizer application	48	60.00	14	17.50	8	10.00
6.	Phosphatic fertilizer	70	87.50	25	31.25	7	8.74
7.	Nitrogenous fertilizer	68	85.00	14	17.50	12	15.00
8.	Potash fertilize	63	78.75	20	25.00	20	25.00
9.	Control early short borer	70	87.50	29	36.25	27	33.75
10.	Bio-control agent for inter-node borer	27	33.75	8	10.00	16	20.00

\* Multiple Response

media sources were found to be less utilized by the respondents. This might be due to there poor accessibility and less affordability to buy mass media sources like television and radio.

### Conclusion :

In this light of the present investigation, it can be concluded that only three characteristic like occupational status, mass media exposure and information sources utilization and innovativeness have significant and positive relationship with learning experience.

The majority of the marginal farmers to prefer personal localite channels for getting information due to easy approachable, accessible and cost effective nature of personal localite channels this might be have enabled the marginal farmers to use them frequently.

Hence, it is necessary to identify the extension educational programmes such as trainings, discussion meetings, demonstration and field visit etc., for need perceptual changes among the sugarcane cultivators.

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